

ABUSING MCKENZIE

The McKenzie River, nationally renowned as one of Oregon's most beautiful and raftable rivers, is being degraded at an astounding rate. At this very moment the Willamette National Forest, McKenzie Ranger District, has awarded more than 1,200 acres of the upper McKenzie watershed, which could be logged by the end of the year, with more than 600 acres still pending award, and hundreds of acres of proposed timber sales.

The McKenzie District employees seem to have blatantly overlooked the fact that thousands of acres of private industrial land are clear-cut every year downriver, that the listed threatened bull trout still tenuously survive in the upper reaches of the river's cold clear waters, and it is the municipal water supply for hundreds of thousands of people in the Eugene/Springfield area.

Further, the Willamette National Forest can't even be trusted to comply with federal court orders or the Northwest Forest Plan when it comes to surveying and protecting rare and sensitive species. Last spring in 2002 citizen surveyors discovered, in one McKenzie timber sale alone, three active red tree vole nests (which require 10-acre buffers per active nest) and at least a dozen sites of a very rare lichen (which require a 150-foot buffer per site). Now, the McKenzie Ranger Station and Willamette National Forest state that they are *not* going to provide those habitat buffers that they are required to by the Northwest Forest Plan. Who and what are these people working for?

Shannon Wilson
Eugene

TAXING CONCERN

I just need to let off some steam about city Ordinance 20273 TSMF (Transportation Systems Maintenance Fee), "not a tax," says the city. I disagree and here is the reason: All property taxpayers foot the bill for education. Since no one is exempt, we will be paying

more tax to pay this fee for K through 12, while those persons in higher education will have higher tuition.

How many jobs will be lost or working hours be cut to pay for this? Churches and organizations such as Goodwill, St. Vincent de Paul and FOOD for Lane County are not exempt from this fee; just another way for them to be kicked while down again. City Council should be proud of itself for this ordinance. Does anyone know how much they will pay, and how long they will pay this fee?

I just signed a petition to repeal this ordinance and ask all taxpayers who are Eugene registered voters to do the same. How much more for goods and services will we pay?

Earl W. Walton
Eugene

SUB-PAR SUBSIDIES

It was very depressing to read Alan Pittman's report that Gov. Kulongoski, Jack Roberts and the Oregon Economic Development Department are *still* pushing corporate subsidies as an answer to the state's economic woes.

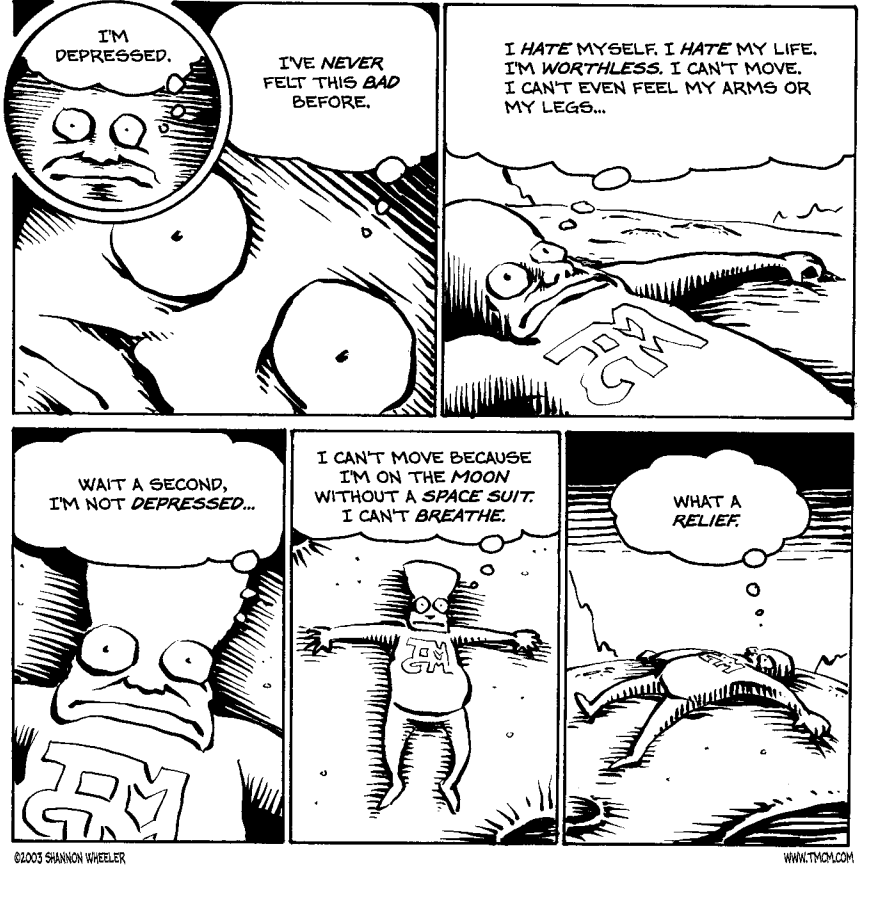
None other than international financier George Soros stated, "Perhaps the greatest threat to freedom and democracy in the world today comes from the formation of unholy alliances between government and business. This is not a new phenomenon. It used to be called fascism... The outward appearances of the democratic process are observed, but the powers of the state are diverted to the benefit of private interests."

The realization that corporate subsidies actually cost more in the long run and in many areas besides economic has been recognized for some time. Pittman lists many of those sources.

Here are a few more. Good Jobs First (www.goodjobsfirst.org/gjf.htm) has been doing analyses of the results of corporate giveaways across the country for years.

David Korten, who worked idealistically

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



with USAID for eight years to help poor countries develop economically, finally realized that the methods used were not only doing the opposite in those countries but also in America "as revealed in the growing gap between rich and poor, dependence on foreign debt, deteriorating educational systems, rising infant mortality, economic dependence on the export of primary commodities (forests), indiscriminate dumping of toxic wastes and the breakdown of families and communities." He came back to America to work on people-centered rather than growth-centered economics.

To fully understand what corporate power has done to our economy, our society, and our rights, read Thom Hartmann's *Unequal Protection*, Arianna Huffington's *Pigs at the Trough* and Marjorie Kelly's *The Divine Right of Capital*. Check out the Program on Corporations, Law and Democracy (www.poclad.org) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom People's Rights Campaign (www.wilpf.org/corp/cintro.htm).

But take your blood pressure medicine.

Wanda S. Ballentine
From exile in Cleveland

OUT OF COMMISSION BY TOM LININGER

Sects, Lies & Videotape

Undercover agents are infiltrating religious organizations.



I'll admit it: I was an unconventional federal prosecutor. I sometimes questioned the authority of the federal government. One of my friends in the FBI called me a "sheep in wolf's clothing." I played in a band called The Grateful Feds.

I left my job at the local U.S. Attorney's Office shortly after John Ashcroft became attorney general. As an outside observer of the Justice Department, I'm concerned that Ashcroft has gone too far with his anti-terrorism initiatives.

One of Ashcroft's policies that deserves re-examination is the new set of investigative guidelines he issued in May of 2002. These guidelines permit the FBI to infiltrate religious organizations without any prior suspicion of criminal activity. Ashcroft reversed a 26-year-old policy — followed by three prior Republican administrations — which prohibited such investigations because they infringe on religious freedoms. This longstanding policy had arisen from concerns about the excesses of J. Edgar Hoover, who had conducted surveillance of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. without any legitimate suspicion of criminal activity.

The FBI is now focusing its attention on mosques. In January 2003, FBI headquarters issued an order requiring all 56 of the FBI's field offices to count the number of mosques in their jurisdictions. By now, all of the mosques in Oregon are probably listed in some FBI report. Whew! I feel safer already.

At first, an FBI spokeswoman told Congress that counting the mosques was neces-

sary to keep track of Muslims who might be terrorists. Across the nation, the media reported that the FBI had begun spying on mosques using confidential informants (in Orlando), undercover agents (in New York City), pole cameras (in Buffalo), and flyovers (in Bloomington).

Then the FBI came under intense criticism for religious profiling. The FBI spokeswomen changed her tune, justifying the infiltration of mosques on the grounds that it helped the FBI prevent hate crimes against Muslims. Interesting logic. By this reasoning, the war against Iraq could be rationalized as a precautionary measure to defend Iraq from outside invaders.

Religious profiling isn't just a violation of civil liberties; it's also a waste of investigative resources. There are more needles in haystacks than there are terrorists in mosques. Why didn't we conduct surveillance of all Christian churches after Timothy McVeigh blew up the federal building in Oklahoma City? We recognized that the overwhelming majority of Christians are law-abiding people. The same is true of Muslims. There are over a million Muslims in the United States, and only a handful of them have been indicted as terrorists.

In early June, the Board of County Commissioners will consider whether to adopt a resolution proposed by the Lane County Bill of Rights Defense Committee. The resolution needs some fine-tuning, but I'm confident that the board will take a stand reaffirming our commitment to civil rights.

I don't mean to impugn the integrity of the federal prosecutors and FBI agents who work here in Eugene. These people are scrupulous public servants. Many of them gave up more lucrative opportunities in the private sector so they could protect the safety of our community. My concern is that federal law enforcement agencies should focus their energy on investigative techniques that are likely to protect public safety, and the religious profiling that Ashcroft has authorized is not one of those techniques.

Tom Lininger, the county commissioner for the East Lane District, is writing a 100-page law review article on undercover investigations of religious organizations. If you're interested in reading a copy of this article, send an e-mail to lininger@law.uoregon.edu.